

Saudi Arabia

The Development and Use of the Multi-Purpose Postage Label 2006 - 2014





This exhibit was produced as an example for a seminar for trainee judges; the results were interesting.

One group of trainees awarded it 92 marks but the expert National Judges struggled to give it much more than a bronze.

The challenge for me was to enter it into a competition and see what happened. It was entered into the 16 sheet individual Postal History class at the Mid Anglia Philatelic Federation competition on 2 July 2022, held in St. Ives, Cambridgeshire, UK.

The result was somewhat unexpected - Gold.

Please feel free to criticize the exhibit and sensible suggestions are welcome.

	MID ANGLIA PHILATELIC FEDERATION INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION	
An Exhibit of	Saudi Arabia – the Multi-purpose Label	
Entered by	Martin Lovegrove	
A member of	King's Lynn	
Was adjudged to have reached	GOLD	(Standard)
and was awarded	85	
in the	Postal History	(Section)
Date 2nd July 2022		 (Judges)

POSTAL HISTORY

16 Sheet

MARKING SHEET

Matin Lovegove King's Lynn

Year of Competition:

2022.

Saudi Arabia: The development and use of Multi-purpose Label

EXHIBIT NO :-	PH 4	POSSIBLE MARKS	MARKS GAINED	COMMENTS
INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT				
1.1 TREATMENT OF SUBJECT & IMPORTANCE		(30)		
a) Treatment of subject (Comprehensive coverage of subject)		20	16/7	An excellent and thorough exhibit of modern Postal History. Thank you for being brave!
b) Importance in relation to study of chosen subject		10	8	
1.2 KNOWLEDGE & RESEARCH		(35)		
a) Subject knowledge - full & accurate		20	18	The size of the covers makes them hard to display
b) Philatelic knowledge - in depth study		10	8	
c) Personal research		5	5	
1.3 CONDITION & RARITY		25		
a) Condition - quality		15	14	-it is unclear how they will be marked. Description made on
b) Rarity - scarcity in terms of availability		10	26	
1.4 PRESENTATION		15		
a) General appearance		5	} 13/9	unfamiliar topic possible to follow.
b) Arrangement - writing up, mounting		5		
TOTALS			84/5	
AWARDS			GOLD	

- GOLD 85
- SILVER GILT 80
- SILVER 70
- SILVER BRONZE 60
- BRONZE 50
- DIPLOMA 40
- CERTIFICATE Under 40

JUDGES SIGNATURE

JUDGES SIGNATURE

DATE 21/06/22

COMMENTS An excellent and thorough exhibit of modern Postal History

Saudi Arabia

The Development and Use of the Multi-Purpose Postage Label 2006 - 2014

Introduction and Plan

As part of an ongoing modernisation programme, Saudi Post introduced a multi-purpose label that combined the functionality of a postage stamp, cancellation, and postal item identification label which could be used for both tracked and non-tracked services. The label was produced and fixed to the item by the post office clerk at the time the item was submitted by the sender.

This exhibit shows the development and use of the label from its introduction in 2006 to the point where it was superceded by a new design in 2014. It shows the various formats used, problems encountered, and accidental errors.

Published information of the subject is almost non-existent apart from that published by the exhibitor.

No official dates relating to these labels has been seen, so the information gathered from the exhibitor's collection has been used.



Exhibit Plan

Pages with special items are marked *

Title	Page	Title	Page
Introduction and Exhibit Plan	1	Label Errors	6 *
Label Description	2	Label Development Variations	7 *
Initial style with post office name in English	3	Label Problems	8 *
Revised style with Post Office name in Arabic	4	Untracked Mail	9
Final style with Post Office name in Arabic, Label with both lines of text in blue	5		

Modern postal history of Saudi Arabia is not widely collected in the United Kingdom and it is extremely unusual to find examples in dealers' stock. The examples in this exhibit originate mainly from Egypt and their condition reflects the fact that they were obtained from non-philatelic sources.

Items of special interest are [mounted on red card](#).

References:

Random Notes, journal of the Arabian Philatelic Association International, numbers 85, 88, 90, 92 containing [articles and notes written by the exhibitor](#).

The International Postage Meter Stamp Catalog by Joel A. Hawkins and Richard Stambaugh, published by the authors. No ISBN. At the time of writing, this book, and updates to it ([some supplied by the exhibitor](#)), are on Wikibooks (https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/International_Postage_Meter_Stamp_Catalog).

Identification of postal items – 13-character identifier. Available for download from the Universal Postal Union website. At the time of writing, the URL was http://www.upu.int/uploads/tx_sbd downloader/S10-12.pdf.

One Man's Stamp Collection. Part I - Saudi Arabia: Modern Technology (1970 - 2018) [written and published by the exhibitor](#). ISBN 978-0-9558246-1-6.

Label Description



Label as first issued

The postal details were printed using a Zebra "ZM400" thermal printer on labels showing three Saudi Post logos and two lines of text 'Saudi Post', the upper in Arabic and the lower in English. The initial issue had the text in blue and lime-green.

Layout

At the top there is a height modulated barcode, the first four digits represent the code for the destination country. 0020 is Egypt. The remaining digits are zeroes terminating with a number indicating the service type. It is known that 8 = registered and 9 = not tracked.



The centre of the label has three lines of text:



- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Type of postal item | 6 | Weight of postal item |
| 2 | Name of post office | 7 | Postage cost |
| 3 | Destination | 8 | Time of posting (12 hour clock) |
| 4 | Post office code | 9 | Date of posting (format mm-dd-yy) |
| 5 | Postal clerk identifier | | |

At the bottom of the label is the postal item identifier in barcode and human readable form; in the case of registered items it is the registration number. The identifier conforms to the UPU S10 standard (Identification of Postal Items - 13 character identifier) [UPU S10]. The barcode type is code 128.



Initial style with post office name in English



The first printed labels issued to post offices had the logos printed in blue and lime-green, the Arabic text in blue and the English text in lime green. These were in use from 2006 to 2013.

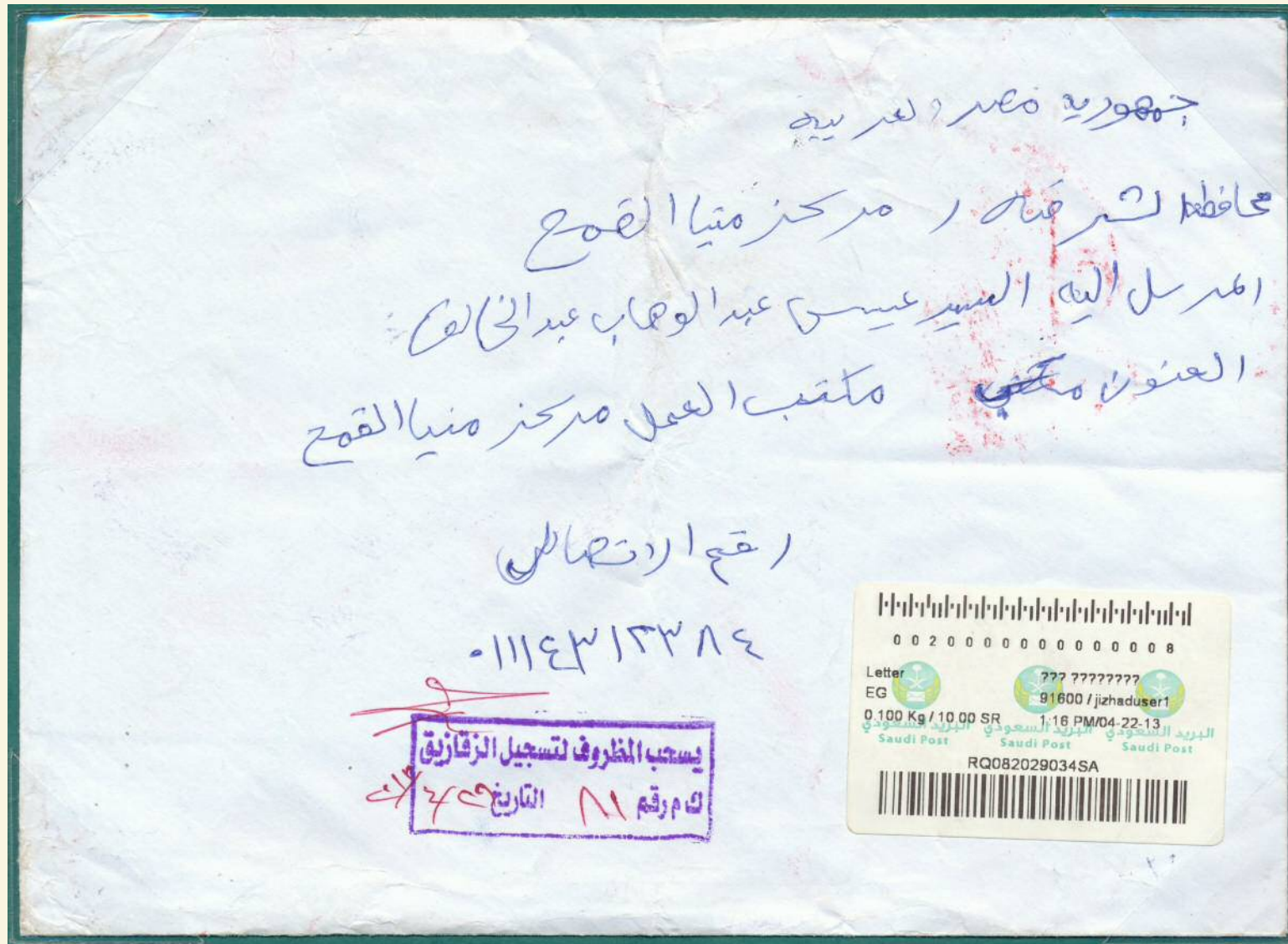
Left: Label showing a letter item to EG (Egypt) at the 7 riyal rate for registered mail (up to 50g) to Arab countries. The letter was posted at the Dawar Aljamia office in Jeddah on 21 July 2007.

During the period 2010 - 2012 the labels were issued to some offices with the labels printed in green and yellow.



Right: Label showing a letter item to Egypt at the 7 riyal rate for registered mail to Arab countries. The letter was posted at the Albareed (The post) office in Najran on 15 March 2011. There were many offices named Albareed in the Kingdom, so the location can only be determined from the office code 130001.

Revised style with Post Office name in Arabic



The change to Arabic office names was made in 2013.

Unfortunately the computer systems in many offices were not capable of printing Arabic text on the Zebra printers resulting in the office name appearing as question marks, either upright or inverted.

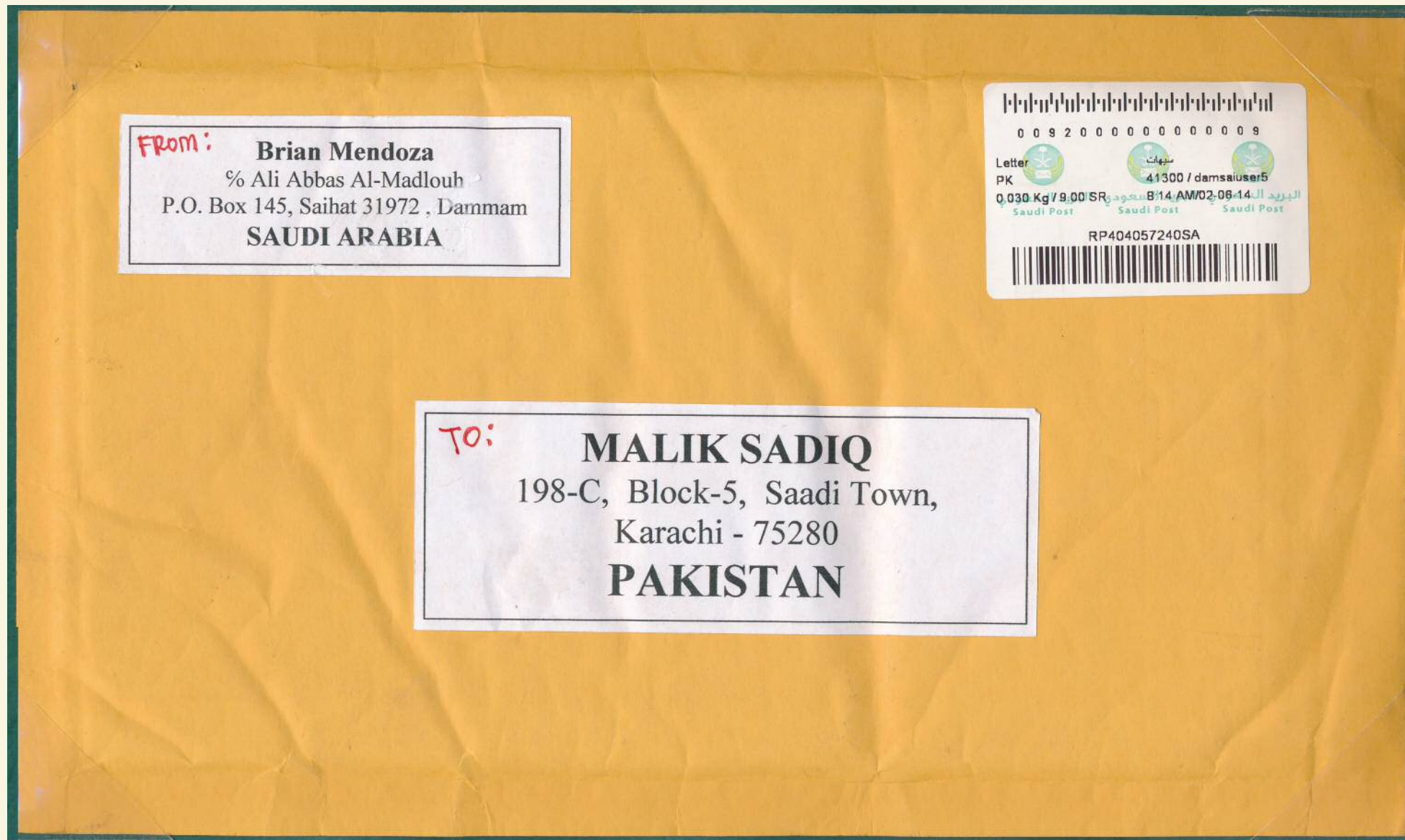
From the few multi-word office names seen, it would appear that the office name was being passed to, or interpreted by, the printer in left to right format.

Left: Label showing a letter item to Egypt at the 10 riyal rate for registered mail (50-100g) to Arab countries. The letter was posted at the Ahad Al-Masarha office in Jizan on 22 April 2013. The correct Arabic for the office is احد المسارحة; from right to left that is three characters followed by eight, the exact pattern of question marks on the label.

Right: Label with correct Arabic office name showing a letter item to Egypt at the 7 riyal rate for registered mail to Arab countries. The letter was posted at the Ahad Al-Masarha office in Jizan on 13 November 2013.



**Final style with Post Office name in Arabic
Label with both lines of text in blue**



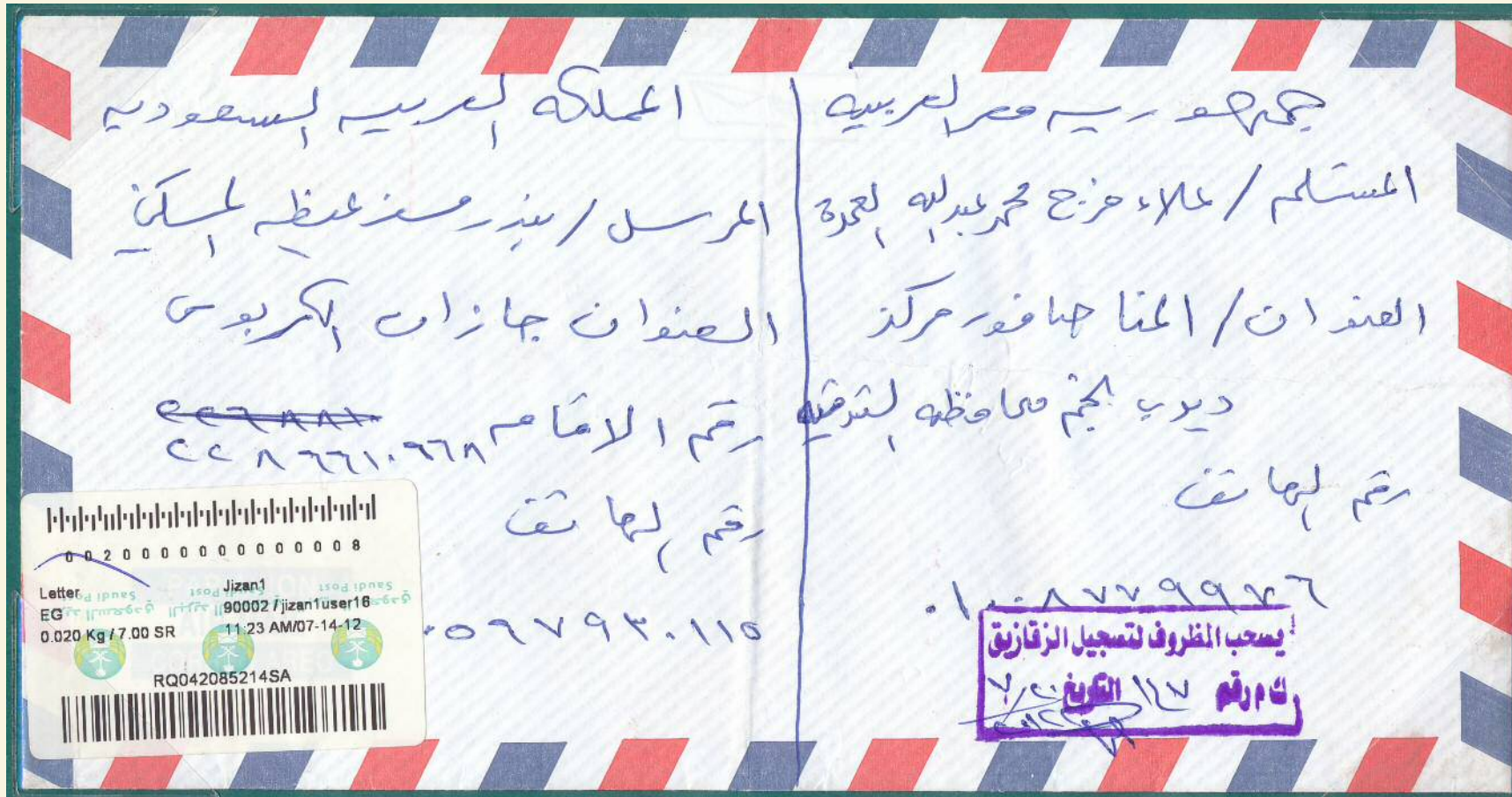
Left: Label showing a letter item to PK (Pakistan) at the 9 riyal rate for registered mail (up to 50g) to non-Arab countries. The letter was posted at the Sihhat office in Dammam on 8 February 2014.

Routes for modern mail cannot usually be determined from transit marks, but tracking information can often be obtained from the postal authority's web site. Saudi Post keeps tracking information for one year from date of posting.

Right: Tracking information for above cover.

Tracking number *		Shipment Status	
Shipment Status	Office	Date	Time
Posting/Collecting	SIHAT	2014-02-06	11:20:00
Under distribution	SIHAT	2014-02-06	11:25:09
Arrived To Office	DAMMAM	2014-02-09	08:36:25
Departed to - RIYADH	DAMMAM	2014-02-09	13:30:16
Arrived To Office	RIYADH	2014-02-10	19:08:44
Departed to - ISALAMABAD	RIYADH	2014-02-11	08:38:28
Arrived To Office	ISALAMABAD	2014-02-23	10:42:00
Departure From InWard office of exchange	ISALAMABAD	2014-02-23	11:57:00
Arrived To Office	KARACHI	2014-02-24	03:03:00

Label Errors



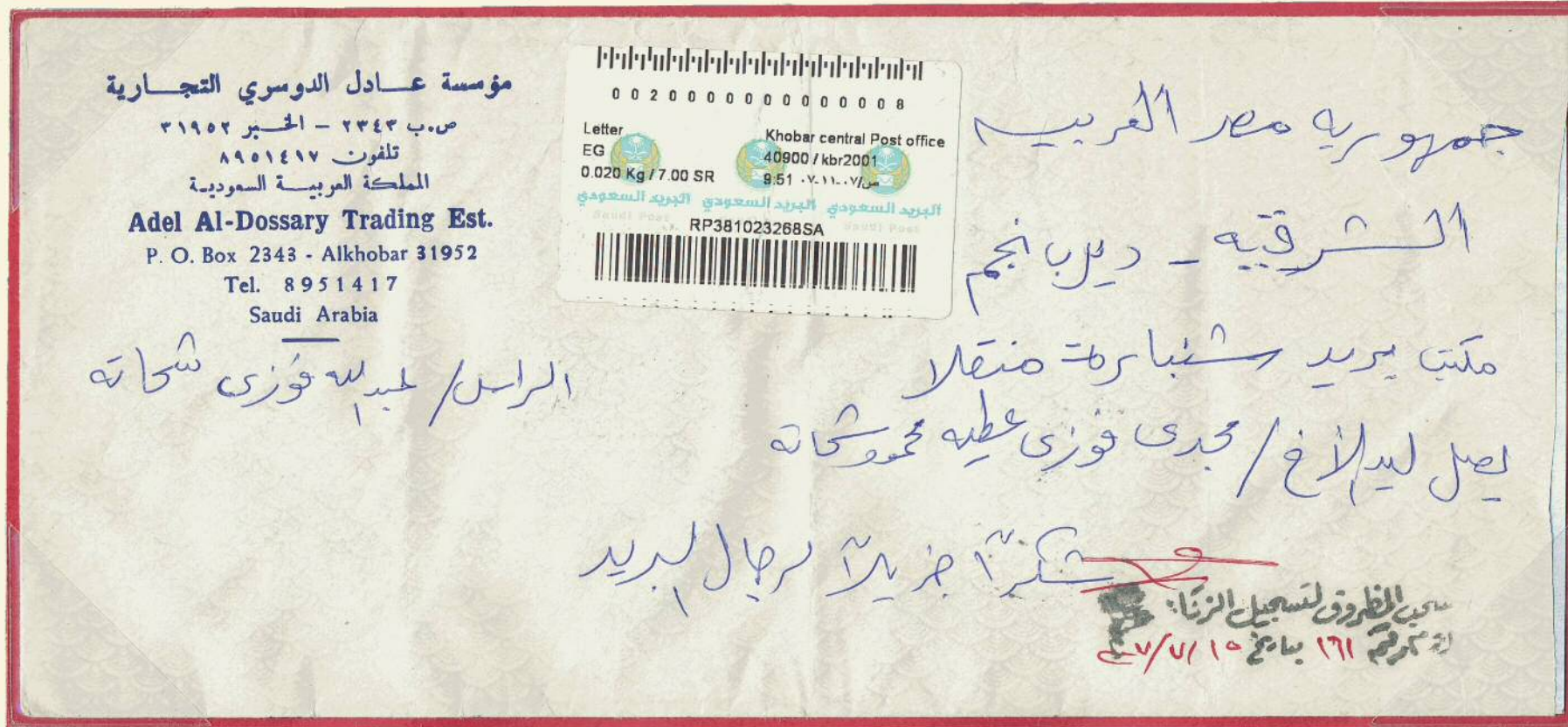
Left: Inverted label showing a letter item to Egypt at the 7 riyal rate for registered mail (up to 50g) to Arab countries. The letter was posted in Jizan on 14 July 2012. The office 90002 was later renamed 'Al Bilad in Jizan'.

Right: Unusual plain label showing a letter item to Egypt at the 7 riyal rate for registered mail (up to 50g) to Arab countries. The letter was posted in Giaï on 21 December 2011. The office 'Giaï' is actually 'Qia Balharith' and is confirmed by the adjacent postmark for 'QUA BALHARES'.

This is the **only plain label seen by the exhibitor**.



Label Development Variations



Left: Label with Gregorian date in Arabic, format yy_dd_mm, followed by /ص meaning morning. Letter item is to Egypt at the 7 riyal rate for registered mail (up to 50g) to Arab countries. The letter was posted in Al Khobar on 7 November 2007. This date format has only been seen used at Al Khobar (2007) and Makkah (2012).

Only three such covers have been seen by the exhibitor.



Right: Label showing a letter item to Egypt at the 7 riyal rate for registered mail (up to 50g) to Arab countries. The label shows the destination in full in Arabic and not as an abbreviation. This has caused the height modulated barcode at top to be all zeroes.

This is the **only label with destination in Arabic** seen by the exhibitor.

Label Problems



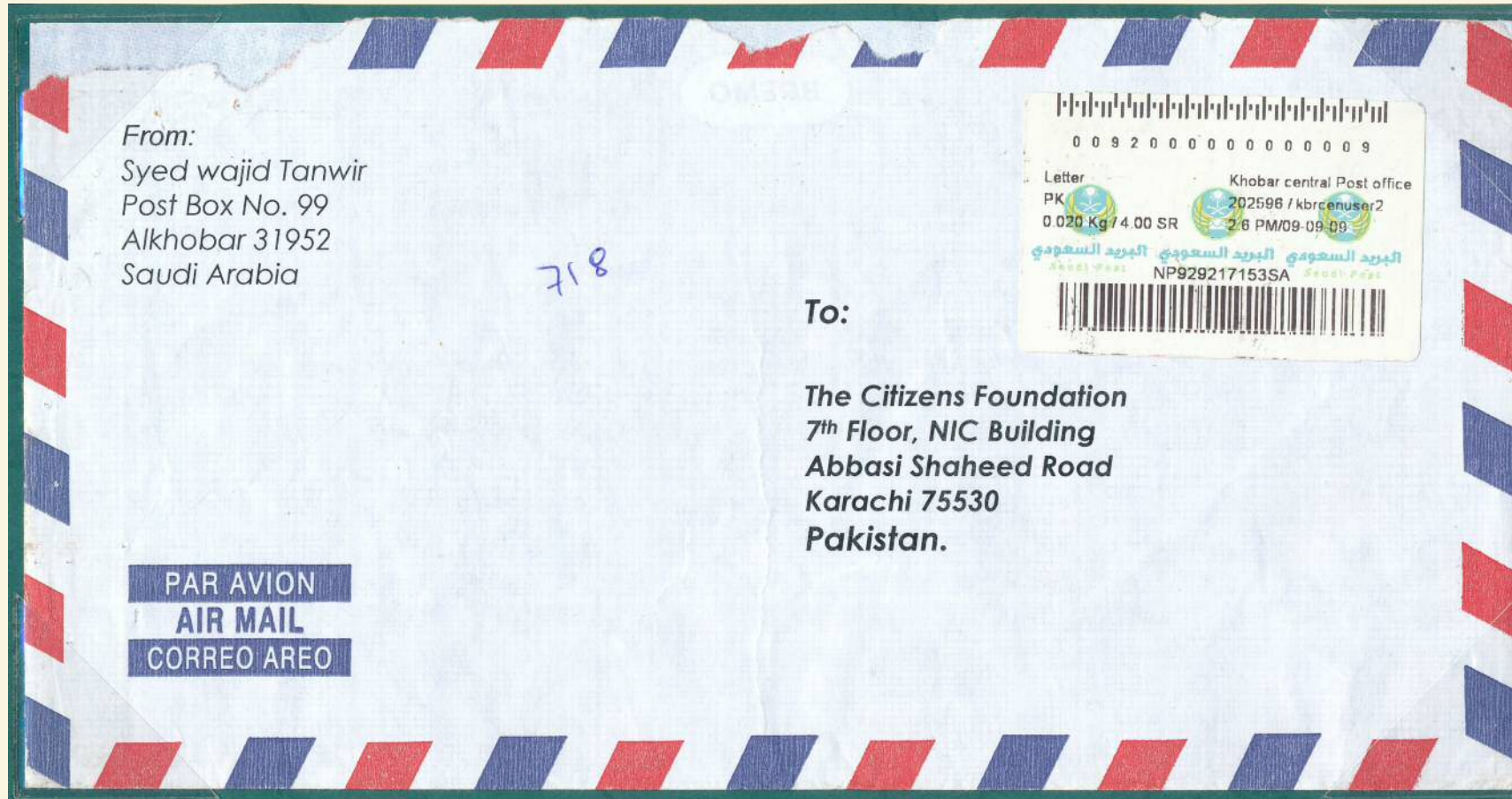
Left: Label with truncated office name and temporary office number 123. Letter item is to Egypt at the 7 riyal rate for registered mail (up to 50g) to Arab countries. The letter was posted in Nu'ayma in Wadi Al Dawasir, Riyadh Region, on 1 November 2010. The office number allocated was 21700.



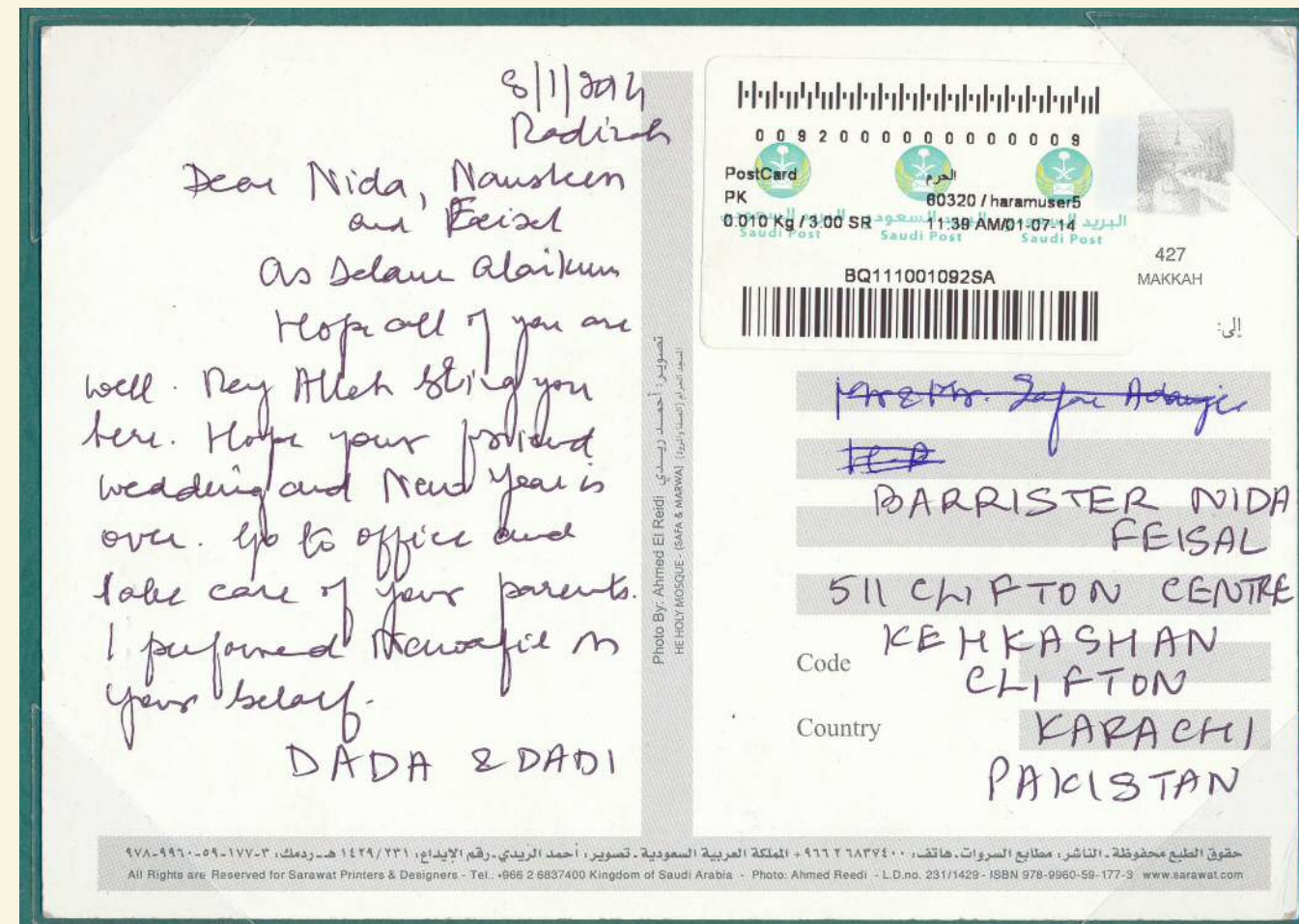
Right: Label showing a letter item to Egypt at the 7 riyal rate for registered mail (up to 50g) to Arab countries. The letter was posted in Umm Al Hammam on 28 July 2007. The label has the barcode omitted, either by design or accident, and replaced by a standard Eastern Region registration label.

This is the **only label with the barcode omitted seen by the exhibitor**.

Untracked Mail



Left: Label with top number ending in 9, showing a letter item to Pakistan at the 4 riyal rate for unregistered mail (up to 50g) to non-Arab countries. The letter was posted at the Al Khobar Central Post Office on 9 September 2009.



Right: Label with top number ending in 9, showing a postcard item to Pakistan at the 3 riyal rate for postcards to non-Arab countries. The card was posted at the Al Haram office in Medina on 7 January 2014.

Early in 2014, new software was installed in post offices to produce labels of a different design and use of the subject label was phased out.